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IT'S GUIDE DOG APPRECIATION MONTH EVERY MONTH!

September 8, 2011 by cpehrson



The International Guide Dog Federation designated September as *Guide Dog Appreciation* month...so are the months of March and April, by different organizations.

For Sachin Pavithran, every month is *Guide Dog Appreciation* month. His black lab, Barstow, has been a part of his life for over eight and a half years and guides Sachin around the Utah State University campus and anywhere else that he needs to go.

National Guide Dog Month was first inspired by Dick Van Patten who was impressed by the intelligence and training of guide dogs. Most guide dogs are labrador retrievers or golden retrievers. They are easy to train and make the best companions. Guide dogs must be intelligent, alert, and willing to serve.

That about sums up Barstow. "He has definitely been a good guide dog. He does what he was trained to do," says Sachin.

Barstow is a familiar and beloved sight around the CPD. He is well-mannered and knows that he is "on duty" when he is here. He lies quietly by Sachin's side during meetings; it is hard not to pet him and talk to him while he is working. He has made some special friends at the CPD who often give him treats and sometimes "dog sit" when Sachin and his family go out of town.

But, the best thing about Barstow for Sachin is the companionship he gives him. "He is with me 24/7 and he is still my buddy!"

Barstow is a great buddy to other members of Sachin's family, as well. When he is home and done "working," Barstow is treated like any other family dog. Here he is with Sachin's daughter, Maya.



On August 29, 2011, Barstow turned 10 years old. That was a bittersweet celebration for the Pavithran family. Most labradors live to be 11-13 years old. Barstow is "pushing his limit," according to Sachin. "His pace has slowed down, and his attention span is shorter."

Sachin plans to get another guide dog when Barstow "retires."

But, no worries...Barstow will get to go back to the California family who raised him as a puppy and who still love him. And he will get to spend time with his puppy buddy, Higgins, who is still with the family.

Barstow can retire knowing that he did his job well, and that he has earned some fun and relaxation on a beach in California.



You can read more about how Sachin and Barstow got together, the training he went through, and see more photos of him in our past CPD blog story *Barstow and Sachin-instant love*.

Sachin is an Assistive Technology Specialist and the Disability Law and Policy Coordinator at the CPD.